



California Veterans Board

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor



NEWSLETTER

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WELCOME MESSAGE FROM DR. VERNON CHONG, MAJ. GEN. (RET), CHAIRMAN OF THE CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD

You hold in your hand or you are reading on your computer screen, the inaugural issue of the California Veterans Board Newsletter. Because many veterans are not aware of what the Board does, this is one of the tools we are using to reach out to the veterans and their families in this great state.

As you will see from reading this first issue, we are in the process of redefining how the Board will operate and carry out its statutorily required mandate, as defined in the state's Military and Veterans Code. At our July meeting in Barstow, you will see from the summary below, we began the restructuring process initiating changes in the meeting format to give those veterans who come to the meetings a greater opportunity to be heard.

The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs provides an update and a forum on the activities of the Department. If possible, we want to answer your questions and concerns as you ask them. We also began the process to rework the Board's mission statement so that it would include specific goals and objectives. The Board also began the process to revamp its committee structure and committee assignments.

At the August meeting we concluded the action on the Board's mission statement and the committee structure and assignments and held the first meeting under the new meeting format. Much of this information can be found on our website <http://www.cdva.ca.gov/board/default.asp> which also includes the agendas and minutes from past meetings and the schedules for upcoming meetings. In addition to the meeting information the website includes copies of the Board's annual reports to the Legislature that outline some of the Board's accomplishments.

We are trying to make this Board more open and accessible to the veterans we serve and this newsletter is only one small, but important part of that process. It is my hope, and that of the other Board members, that as we progress we will get greater participation from the veterans community and become an even better advocate and sounding Board for issues that are of concern to California's 2.3 million veterans.

We have an exciting future ahead of us in this state. The California Department of Veterans Affairs has made great progress in the development of the five new state veterans homes in Los Angeles, Lancaster, Ventura, Fresno and Redding. It is important that the veterans' community be involved in this process and I hope that with our new meeting format and some of our outreach efforts, we can engage more California veterans in the process of building a strong veterans program here in this state.

CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Vernon Chong
Chairman

Randal J. Bressette
Vice Chairman

Leo P. Burke
Member

Jake Alarid
Member

Alice Astafan
Member

Colin Shadell
Member

Please join us at our meetings. We hold meetings throughout the state and the schedule and locations are listed on our website. Help us to help veterans.

Thank you for reading.

GEORGE G. SINOPOLI, TIRELESS ADVOCATE FOR VETERANS

George Sinopoli, a former Chairman of the California Veterans Board, and a strong, tireless advocate for veterans, passed away on Wednesday, August 30th. Sinopoli was 88 years old.

A veteran of the United States Army Air Corps from 1942-1945, Sinopoli was first appointed to the Veterans Board by Governor Pat Brown in 1964. He was also appointed to serve on the Veterans Board by Governors Jerry Brown and Gray Davis.

Sinopoli was very active in The American Legion, having served in many capacities, including Department Commander (1977) and California State Chairman of the Citizens Flag Alliance. He was also a life member of the AMVETS and the Disabled American Veterans.

HIGHLIGHTS OF JULY 6-7 CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD MEETING IN BARSTOW, CALIFORNIA

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS: Board meetings are being announced as Meetings of the California Veterans Board and California Department of Veterans Affairs Forum.

MEETING FORMAT CHANGE: The Board will be allowing veterans to speak at the beginning of the meetings, rather than at the end, and will no longer have a 3-minute time limit. This will allow for a more interactive comment, question and answer session.

MISSION STATEMENT: The Board is reworking the current mission statement with goals and objectives to better reflect its purpose so that the Veterans will have a better understanding of the Board's function. This document can be viewed at <http://www.cdva.ca.gov/board/Mission.Statement-Vision-Values-Goals.8-06.pdf>.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND ASSIGNMENTS: The Board is revamping its committee structure and will be making member assignments for the August meeting. This document can be viewed at <http://www.cdva.ca.gov/board/Committee.Assignments-Org.Chart.06.pdf>.

POLICIES: The Board adopted several new policies. Policy A-4.1 a Production of Records by Division of Appeals. This will prescribe policies and procedures for the department in producing records on appeals to the CalVet Board. And second, Policy A-13. This policy will allow for veterans, their spouses, dependents and survivors to seek permission to file a late application for benefits and to provide for Board review of any adverse decision on such an application. These documents can be viewed at http://www.cdva.ca.gov/board/Policy_A-4.1.pdf and http://www.cdva.ca.gov/board/Policy_A-13.pdf.

HIGHLIGHTS OF AUGUST 10-11 CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD MEETING IN SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

VISITOR FROM THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE: Robert Glazier from the Governor's Communication Office spoke to the Board regarding their role and responsibilities as a Board.

MISSION STATEMENT: The Board unanimously approved revised mission, vision and value statements to better reflect its purpose. Veterans should have a better understanding of the Board's function. This document can be viewed at <http://www.cdva.ca.gov/board/Mission Statement-Vision-Values-Goals 8-06.pdf>.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND ASSIGNMENTS: The Board revised its committee structure and finalized its 2006 committee assignments. This document can be viewed at <http://www.cdva.ca.gov/board/Committee Assignments-Org Chart 06.pdf>.

RESOLUTION PRESENTED: The Board presented a resolution to former Board member James Crump in appreciation for his service on the board from November 2004, to January 2006.

PRESENTATION BY VETERANS HOME STAFF: Administrator Marcella McCormack and Dr. Dianne Winne of the Yountville Veterans Home presented a PowerPoint overview of the veterans' homes admission and disqualification policies.

POLICY APPROVED: The Board approved Policy C-12 – Resident Participation in Health Service Plans. The purpose of this policy is to maximize resident participation in federal, state, and private health service plans and to ensure that the Department seeks reimbursement for health care that is provided to the residents of the California Veterans Homes. This document can be viewed at <http://www.cdva.ca.gov/board/Policy C-12 Health Service Plans.pdf>.

CDVA STAFF REPORTS: Executive Staff from the Department attended the meeting to report on upcoming marketing plans and newsletters, educational outreach and job fairs for veterans, the latest capital project progress, and electronic medical records/health information system.

- The Yountville Veterans Home gave their new tour bus a tryout and brought some of their Allied Council members and residents to the meeting.
- The Chula Vista and Barstow Veterans Homes joined the meeting by videoconference.

NEXT MEETING: The Board's September meeting has been rescheduled due to the passing of Mr. Sinopoli and will now be held on September 28-29 at New Directions, Inc., 11303 Wilshire Blvd., VA Bldg. 116, Los Angeles, California 90073. For more details please check the Board's website at <http://www.cdva.ca.gov/board/default.asp>.